

***Acrolepiopsis marcidella* (Curtis) (Lep.: Yponomeutidae) and other microlepidoptera on Guernsey and Sark**

Phil Sterling's short stay on Guernsey from 30 May to 1 June 2003 yielded much of entomological interest on both Guernsey and Sark. Several species new to Guernsey were identified (either in the field or from previously set specimens and genitalia preparations) and a day on Sark produced a list of 40 species, 27 of which had not previously been recorded from that island. The first of these, *Scrobipalpa sauadensis*, was found within minutes of landing on the island in the toilets next to the harbour.

In a telephone conversation planning what we might do during his visit, I had suggested to Phil that we could perhaps look for cases of *Bankesia douglasii*. This he was more than willing to do but felt that in light of a recent paper (Sattler, K., Shaffer, M., 2002. Notes on British Psychidae (Lepidoptera). *Entomologist's Gaz.*, **53**:239-242), which discusses the confusion between *Baukesia douglasii* and *Bankesia conspurcatella*, we should first establish which of the two species was present on Guernsey as it is *conspurcatella*, rather than *douglasii*, that is now known to be present on Jersey. I therefore sent Phil the abdomen from each of the four specimens in my collection for dissection and he was quickly able to establish that they were in fact all *conspurcatella*. My interest in this species arose because although (what I now know to be) *conspurcatella* is locally not uncommon early in the year, when adults can be seen flying in the early morning sun as well as in light traps and even at the light of my kitchen window, the cases, as far as I know, had never been found on Guernsey. Nevertheless, they were soon discovered in three places: Petit Bot, a wooded valley on the south coast of Guernsey; Harbour Hill on Sark; and at the top of our garden behind the greenhouse! In each case the location was similar: a dark and virtually sunless position which was damp but which appeared to dry out occasionally. At Petit Bot and in our garden, the cases were found on an old dry stone wall where the soil between the large irregular stones had been washed away to leave a cavity. They were attached to the underside of the overhanging stone and immediately above that stone there were dead leaves, loose soil and general detritus. On Sark the cases were found in a similar situation but on an unrendered breezeblock wall. At this time of year the cases were empty.

The most interesting species, and one that Phil suspected might be present on the island, was *Acrolepiopsis marcidella* which was found at Petit Bot when a single adult moth was beaten from a clump of Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), a plant frequently encountered on the south of the island. This moth has a curious life history with the newly hatched larva first mining the cladode on which the egg was laid, then feeding on the growing tip of a shoot, before completing its feeding in a berry (Sterling, P.H., Langmaid, J.R., 1998. The life history of *Acrolepiopsis marcidella* (Curtis) (Lepidoptera: Yponomeutidae). *Entomologist's Gaz.*, **49**:151-154.)

On our return from Petit Bot my wife Pat presented Phil with a moth she had found sitting on Pellitory (*Parietaria judaica*) in our garden. Phil was able to confirm her provisional identification of *Cosmopterix pulchrimella* and on being

shown the plant on which it had been discovered, immediately found some early mines. Adult moths of this species had been reared from mines found in our garden, and elsewhere in Guernsey, last year (Sterling, P.H., Costen, P.D.M., Austin, R.A., in press. *Cosmopterix pulchriuella* Chambers, 1875 [Lepidoptera: Cosmopterigidae] resident in the Channel Islands. *Entomologist's Gaz.*) and it was a particular pleasure to see that this beautiful but tiny moth had survived a winter here in which temperatures had on occasions been unusually low. It would appear that moths hatch during the late autumn and winter and remain as adults until May when egg-laying begins. Larvae are then found during the summer months with a generation of adults in late summer and early autumn, followed by another generation of larvae in the middle of autumn.

The night temperatures during Phil's visit were favourable for moths and on the morning of 31 May he took two specimens of a *Biselachista* species, one at each of the mercury vapour and actinic traps we ran in the garden, and these he subsequently identified as *Biselachista eleochariella*. On visiting the wetland near to me at La Claire Mare on the evening of 1 June he found a further specimen, suggesting that the species may be breeding there. *Biselachista eleochariella* is a local species in the British Isles, especially in the south, and this appears to be a new record for the Channel Islands.

No note about Guernsey moths is complete without the mention of W.A. Luff who in late Victorian times recorded over 450 species on Guernsey and Sark. And no Guernsey entomological expedition is complete without a search for the cases of *Luffia lapidella* the eponymous generic name of which was given in his honour by the founder of this journal. In contrast to those of *couspurcatella*, the habitat requirements of *lapidella* seemed far less specific and cases were found on many lichen-covered granite walls on Guernsey and Sark, both inland and on the coast, and in far greater numbers than those of *couspurcatella*.

A list of new records for the Channel Islands (VC 113) will appear subsequently in this journal in the annual Microlepidoptera Review, and fuller lists of all the species found in the *Report and Transactions of La Société Guernesiaise*.

I am grateful to Phil Sterling for the interest he shows in the moths of Guernsey and for the help and encouragement he continues to give me personally, not least in my attempts to understand the life cycle of *pulchriuella*.— P. D. M. COSTEN, La Broderie, La Claire Mare, St Peters, Guernsey, GY7 9QA. (E-mail: pcosten@guernsey.net)

***Argyresthia trifasciata* Staudinger (Lep: Yponomeutidae) - new for Wales**

On 31 May 2003, I was in North Wales, at the home of John Smith, a member of Butterfly Conservation who lives at Marford, near Wrexham, in Denbighshire (VC 50). John identifies the macro-moths that come to his garden trap, but has little enthusiasm for the "micros". Hence after emptying the trap I returned home with several live moths, including two of a tiny, unfamiliar, but highly distinctive